



Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

EQIP, Session 1240 H

EQIP → CIG

- Discretionary provision authorized under 2002 Farm Bill for Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
- Competitive proposals managed by NRCS with funds from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)
- An opportunity to accelerate the development, transfer and/or adoption of new conservation technologies or approaches for agriculture

CIG

- Leverage federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production
- Accelerate the transfer of promising technologies into NRCS technical guides and manuals

2006 CIG Components

- **National component:** proposals administered by NRCS National Head Quarters (up to 20 million)
- **State component:** proposals administered by NRCS Caribbean Area State Office. Open to Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands (\$260,000)

CIG Objectives

- To establish innovative processes or technologies that have been effectively applied in the conservation of the natural resources
- Could be a local or outside of the Caribbean Area-innovation.

CIG

- It is NOT the objective of CIG to provide funds for pure research (No laboratories)

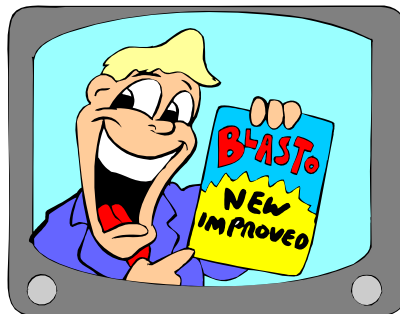


Focus of CIG, Examples

- To market a new process in a watershed or ecosystem to stimulate the reduction of potential contaminants.
 - To stimulate plantings for carbon sequestration
 - To stimulate processes to reduce P soil buildup
 - New alternatives from grass-roots groups to overcome an environmental concern
- Pilot projects with high potential for success

Examples

- Demonstration of a conservation practice with a low adoption rate in or out CB.
- Demonstration of a new way to approach a conservation concern.
- A known conservation practice but with a new environmental focus.



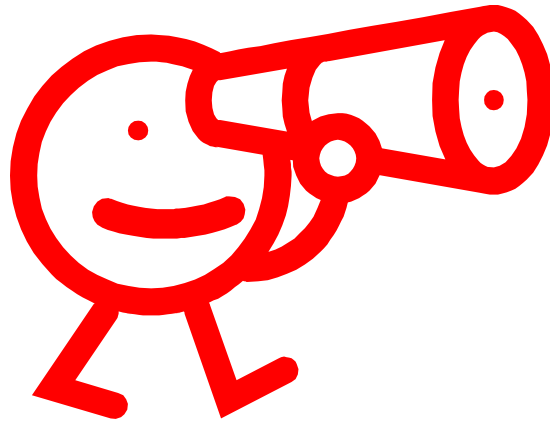
Project Eligibility

- EQIP practices already established are generally ineligible.
- Regularly, funds will not be granted for practices receiving funds under EQIP unless there is new way to apply the practice to certain concerns.



Must be innovative, novelty

NHQ emphasizes in innovative projects.



CIG

- Will fund up to 50% of the total cost of the project
- The other 50% must be provided by the applicant
 - From this 50%, 25 must be cash and the other 25% in kind services.



Special Provisions

- For Limited Resource Farmers and New Farmers and Ranchers up to 10 percent of the State funds may be set aside for applications from these groups.
- Applicants from these groups may derive 75% of their matching funds from in-kind services



Applicant eligibility

- State or local units of government
- Non-gov organizations
- Individuals
- Non profits
- For profit companies

Examples: Universities, grassroots groups, private organizations, individuals, trusts.

Should a group such as a trust charges a minimum amount of \$ for maintenance, **they are eligible.**

ALL EXCEPT FOR FEDERAL AGENCIES

CIG Eligibility

- ALL CIG projects must involve EQIP eligible producers
- Land under other NRCS Program
IS ELIGIBLE

For 2006 CIG

Natural Resource Concerns foci are:

1. Water Resources: implement new technology or approaches to maintain, restore or enhance water quality and/or quantity with predominantly agricultural land uses while sustaining productivity.

Ej: nutrients, pesticide and pathogens transport to surface and ground water; sediment transport; irrigation management for water conservation; aquifer recharge/maintenance; reuse of water

For 2006 CIG

Natural Resource Concerns are:

2. Soil Resources: implement new technologies or approaches to maintain, restore or enhance soils associated with agricultural and forest land uses:

Ej; erosion reduction; accumulation of harmful levels of substances in soils; soil quality and productivity

For 2006 CIG

Natural Resource Concerns are:

3. Atmospheric resources: implement new technologies to maintain, restore or enhance air quality and atmospheric resources by:

Ej; controlling agricultural emissions of particles, odors, gases, etc.; carbon sequestration in soil; bio-energy.

For 2006 CIG

Natural Resource Concerns are:

4. Grazingland and forest health:

implement new technologies or approaches to maintain, restore or enhance grazinglands and forestlands while maintaining productivity.

Ej; management of invasive species; effects of pests, diseases and fragmentation on lands; Manage grazing.

For 2006 CIG

The technology foci are:

1. Improve farm energy
2. Market based approaches
3. Improve forage production
4. Drainage water management

For 2006 CIG

The wildlife habitat foci are:

1. Availability of native plant materials
2. Invasive animal/plant control methods

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- All national proposals must include a letter from the CB Area Director and must be sent to the State Office before March 17th, 2006.



Grants Management

- National Administrator
- Local Coordinator. Provides guide.
- Contract Officer (Florida State Office)
- Federal Grant Representative (FGR): lead technical point of contact for grantees. Final technical responsibilities.
- Technical Contact (TC): Provide support to FGR. “Closer to the ground”

Grantee

The grantee is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully implement and complete the project.



Evaluation process

A review panel will score and rank the proposals based on the criteria established in the announcement:

Proposals will be classified as:

Recommended for funding

Consider for funding

Not recommended



Criteria for Evaluation

- **Purpose and goals:** are clearly stated and related to NRCS mission and vision.
- **Soundness of approach:** innovative, science based, environmental protection, and likelihood for success.
- **Management:** Clear timelines, staff, collaboration, expertise, adequate budget.
- **Transferability:** diffusion potential, enhance NRCS FOTG's and manuals.

NRCS EMPLOYEES CANNOT

- Those involved in the evaluation process cannot make out side comments about the proposal.
- Cannot write or help to write proposals.
- RC&D could provide support but cannot write or be explicit in the proposal.



State Technical Committee

- States must use a subcommittee or member of the State Technical Committee to evaluate proposals. NRCS outsiders must sign a confidentiality document as the proposals are NOT a public document.

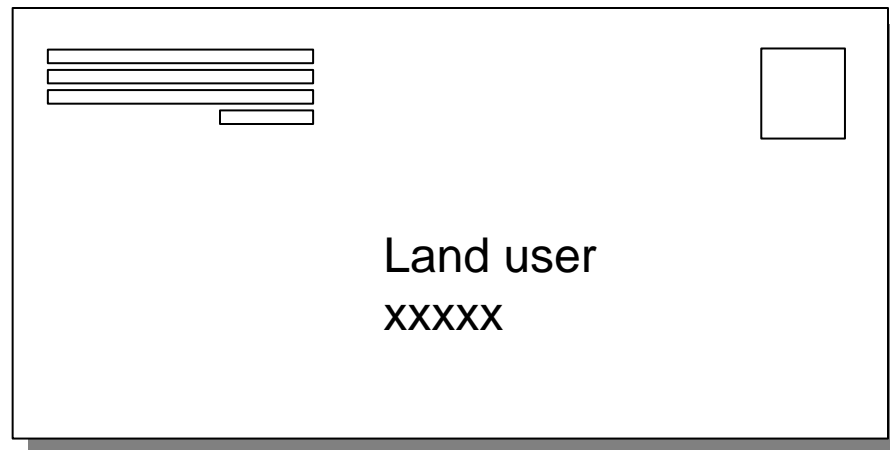


Technical Team

- Makes recommendations to the Director
- The Director makes final decisions
- The Director designates FGR and TC
- FGR and TC could be local or national employees

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- Proposals received by the due date will be acknowledged with an official letter.

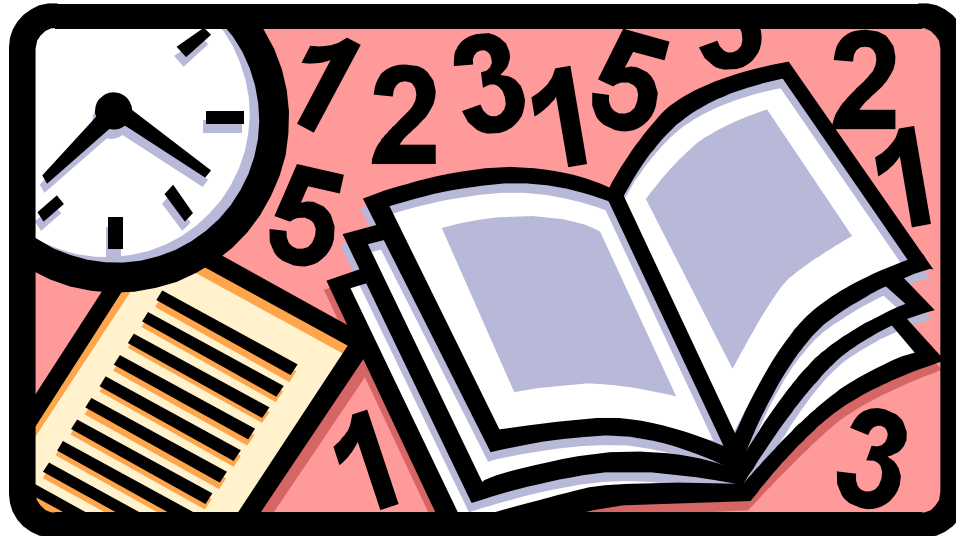


Grantee Reporting Requirements

- Every 6 months the grantee must submit a written performance progress report to NHQ or State Office.
- Every 4 months a Financial Status Report
- One final report at the end of the project
 - For details see the Announcement

NRCS Employees Reporting

IN TCAS Under EQIP CIG



Signing Period

National Component:

– Jan 5 to March 20, 2006

State Component:

Feb 1 to May 1, 2006

Due date for State Component: May 1, 06, at 5:00 pm. NRCS State Office

For more information

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig

- Cover sheet SF 424:

www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/sf424.pdf

- Budget Information:

www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/sf424a.pdf

- Other certifications:

www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/sf424b.pdf

Or contact: Edwin Más. 787-832-4040 X3471

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